

April 25, 2022

The Honorable Gabe Albornoz  
President, Montgomery County Council  
Stella Werner Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: FY 2023 Operating Budget Priorities-Healthcare for the Uninsured

Dear Council President Albornoz and Councilmembers,

Thank you for your strong commitment to providing support for the low-income, uninsured residents of our County. Equitable access to essential services, especially access to timely, appropriate and high quality healthcare is necessary for a vibrant, thriving community. The services provided through these programs support County residents in achieving all life goals and help them thrive in their roles as parents, students, employees, employers, neighbors and active members of our shared community.

As you are finalizing the County's operating budget for FY 2023, we urge you to support the following key priorities:

- Increase the reimbursement rate for Montgomery Cares and Care for Kids providers to offset the rapidly rising cost of providing essential healthcare.
- Allocate additional funding to support specialty care referrals for Montgomery Cares and Healthcare for the Homeless patients to match service demand.
- Provide funding to support psychiatric services in shelter settings for patients experiencing homelessness.
- Approve funding to provide adequate administrative support and to implement a comprehensive quality framework for the Care for Kids program to align quality standards with the Montgomery Cares Program.
- Allocate funding to enable a collaborative design framework to realign safety-net dental services in a manner that improves access and enhances care delivery.
- Ensure that new mothers in the Maternity Partnership program will have access to a lactation consultant by providing funding to launch a breastfeeding support program.

The base reimbursement rate for Montgomery Cares and Care for Kids providers has been flat since FY 2020 and will remain flat if an increase is not added to the current budget. The rapidly rising costs for medical professional salaries and core operational costs impacted by inflation will further strain the organizations that are providing one of the most essential services to our most vulnerable populations without a reasonable rate adjustment to offset these increase. The list we have provided focuses on essential programs with a broad and measurable impact. A detailed explanation of our full request has been sent separately to each member of the Council.

Thank you for your continued support of the programs that serve our uninsured residents and thank you for your consideration of these requests for the FY 2023 operating budget.

Sincerely,

Mark Foraker  
Health Clinic Leadership Council, Chair, &  
Mercy Health Clinic, CEO